

FRANKLIN H. MARTIN

1857 — 1935

A RETROSPECT AND AN APPRECIATION

FRANKLIN H. MARTIN ended a long life and a short illness, passing away on March 7, 1935. He has left, in his own words in his autobiographies, "The Joy of Living and Fifty Years of Medicine and Surgery," a record of his early life, of his professional struggle for self-development, recognition and advancement as well as of his promotion, organization and administration of the monumental enterprises that perpetuate his name. He has told us himself of his life on a Wisconsin farm with the sweet recollections of a happy boyhood, of a country schoolmaster and of his sudden inspiration to become a physician. This simple determination and the immediate decision to bring it to function; this prompt reception of a dream followed by action to make the vision real with an unfaltering persistence in spite of difficulty, till his goal was reached; these qualities of vision, action, perseverance, never left him.

He has told us of how he worked his way through medical school, taking his degree in 1880, serving as interne at Mercy Hospital in Chicago and beginning practice there, where the rest of his life was spent.

Anyone who feels an interest in the development of medicine in the so-called Middle West in the last fifty years or who desires an insight as to the trends of American medicine during that time, or anyone who wishes a simple and complete recital of an integrated life, should read these books. He tells with detail and unfailing enthusiasm of the men he met, of his own personal reaction to the petty details and necessities of his daily life, of his discouragements and of his satisfaction in success, in a way that makes his reader share.

He was early attracted to the field of gynecology and played an important part in the development of the Post Graduate School and Hospital in Chicago. He worked, adjusting the newer discoveries in antisepsis and asepsis to his chosen field. He affiliated himself with organized medical activity in his city. He taught himself to discuss and to debate. He wrote, read, traveled and familiarized himself with the work of other men. He attempted simple research and experiment. He grew and acquired the qualities of a leader and always apparently saw visions and dreamed dreams.

In 1886 he was happily married to Isabelle Hallister, a daughter of Dr. John H. Hallister, a prominent physician of the city, and to her influence and help in all his afterlife he has himself borne abundant witness. With her and with many friends and friendships he made himself at home in the vigorous, virile, smoky city on the lake.

Success came to him and with it the major action of his life began. In 1905, with the collaboration of Murphy, Senn, Andrews, Besley, Cubbins, Kanavel and others, he established Surgery, Gynecology and Obstetrics, a journal of which he became the managing editor, a post he continued to hold until his death. The International Abstract of Surgery was added to the Journal in 1913 and its editorial board has been fortified and augmented from year to year by associates now styled as those for The American College of Surgeons and others for the British Empire. Many of the important contributions in surgery and its specialties have appeared in its pages. It has provided an organ of record and proposal for the American College of Surgeons and its manifold activities, growing in circulation and authority. It is without doubt one of the more prominent surgical journals of the world.

In 1910, at his instigation, a Clinical Congress was held in Chicago under the auspices of Surgery, Gynecology and Obstetrics. This was followed by sessions in Philadelphia and New York, loosely organized and in the need of a more closely knit fabric. The idea of the American College of Surgeons was born.

In 1913, the organization of the College was perfected with Dr. Franklin H. Martin, Director-General. His whole time, interest, vigor and imagination have been spent without stint in that enterprise from that day. The great importance of that foundation is too little appreciated even by many of the active fellows of the College itself. The work in hospital standardization and of the promulgation of reasonable standards of excellence, in the care of fractures, of malignant diseases, in industrial surgery, emanated from him.

The foundation of the Murphy Memorial Library in Chicago, its stand in the matter of fee division and many other activities, have apparently just begun to have an appreciable effect. This is not the place nor is it yet time to assess the value of the colossus for which he was primarily responsible. How far his effort to stem a rising tide of irresponsibility and commercialism in American surgery will be successful, must remain for the conscience, the courage and the intelligent action of his successors to show. Certainly he never faltered. His own clear and simple ideals remained impregnable to the end and with devotion and sincerity he finished his course and kept the faith. Too soon to speak of the fate of his movements. Of what movement can this not be said? But of the man himself and his memory it is not too soon to say that the big things he loved and strove for will not lose their value. That as distance gives perspective, his shadow will lengthen and his uncircumstantial greatness grow more and more evident as the years pass by, and those of us who knew and loved him for his kindness, his never failing courtesy and his helpful confidence and encouragement for the younger man, will never replace his loss.

JOHN E. JENNINGS